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AUTHOR	Engleman, Melissa Darrow; Maddox, June I.
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ABSTRACT

This final report describes the federally-funded Transition Challenge-North Carolina Project (TRAC-NC), a project that prepared 45 newly qualified individuals to serve students with low-incidence disabilities over the last four years. The project provides: (1) add-on certification and/or master's degree training to persons preparing to teach individuals with low-incidence disabilities (100 students are currently TRAC-NC scholars); (2) supplementary training to add-on certification and/or master's degree students to assure depth of knowledge in several specific areas of low-incidence disabilities; (3) an extensive library of print and video resources regarding low-incidence disabilities; and (4) a permanent masters degree program within the Special Education Department of the School of Education at East Carolina University. The project has also been approved by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as a teacher-training site for certification in the area of severe/profound disabilities. Courses specifically designed for the TRAC-NC program include: Introduction to Low Incidence Populations, Methods and Curriculum in Elementary and Transition Programming for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities, Methods and Curriculum for Secondary Programming and Competitive Employment for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities, and six hours of supervised intern experience in programs for students with severe/profound disabilities. (CR)

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Preparation of Personnel for Service to Low-Incidence Disability Populations: Final Report

Melissa Darrow Engleman, Ed.D.

June I Maddox, Ph.D.

East Carolina University

Greenville, NC

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The demand for fully qualified personnel to provide educational services to individuals with low-incidence disabilities continues to exceed availability. Due to the small number of personnel needed in each state for these highly specialized positions, there is a continuing reluctance on the part of higher education and state level training programs to support professional development programs designed specifically for these areas of training. The logistical and financial difficulties involved in providing such teacher training programs are amplified even further in the context of a rural, poverty area such as eastern North Carolina. The Transition Challenge-North Carolina Project (1993-1997) prepared 45 newly qualified individuals to serve students with low-incidence disabilities over the last four years. But even with this recent success, eastern North Carolina continues to experience an emergency situation, where very few students with low-incidence disabilities actually receive services from personnel who are specifically trained to meet their needs.

The (1997-2000) TRAC-NC project (1) provides add-on certification and/or master's degree training to persons preparing to teach individuals with low-incidence disabilities (100 students are currently TRAC-NC scholars); (2) provides supplementary training to add-on certification and/or master's degree students to assure depth of knowledge in several specific areas of low-incidence disabilities; (3) has an extensive library of print and video resources regarding low-incidence disabilities; (4) has developed into a permanent masters degree program within the Special Education Department of the School of Education at East

Carolina University; (5) has been approved by the Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina as a teacher-training site for certification in the area of Severe/Profound Disabilities.

Courses specifically designed for the TRAC-NC program include: (a) Introduction to Low Incidence Populations, (b) Methods and Curriculum in Elementary and Transition Programming for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities, (c) Methods and Curriculum for Secondary Programming and Competitive Employment for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities, and (d) six hours of supervised intern experiences in programs for students with severe/profound disabilities.

Three day-long seminars are offered during the school year as supplements to the required course work. Nationally known speakers focus on specific areas, i.e., deaf-blindness, legal aspects, teaming, family issues, etc., and provide students with state-of-the art information. All TRAC-NC scholars are required to attend two of the yearly seminars, and any available space is offered to faculty, students, parents, and other interested individuals.

Unlike many grant funded programs, the TRAC-NC program has been embraced by East Carolina University, and is now established as a part of the College of Education, thus assuring a continual production of highly trained and qualified teachers of individuals with severe/profound disabilities for eastern North Carolina.